

# Book Reviews

The Western Journal of Medicine does not review all books sent by publishers, although information about new books received is printed elsewhere in the journal as space permits. Prices quoted are those given by the publishers.

**CURRENT PERSPECTIVES IN ALLERGY**—Edited by E. J. Goetzel, MD, Professor of Medicine, Howard Hughes Medical Institute, Division of Allergy and Immunology, Department of Medicine, University of California, San Francisco, and A. B. Way, PhD, DSc, FRCP, Director and Professor, Department of Allergy and Clinical Immunology, Cardiothoracic Institute, London. Churchill Livingstone, 1560 Broadway, New York, NY 10036, 1982. 185 pages, \$19.50 (softbound).

This slim volume contains 16 chapters written by 18 well-regarded experts in a US-UK collaboration. The title is the first of a proposed series on "Contemporary Issues in Clinical Immunology and Allergy." Upcoming publications in this series are current perspectives in immunodermatology and immunology of respiratory diseases.

The format promotes rapid reading because of the liberal use of headings, short paragraphs and brief chapters. There are no reference citations in the body, but each chapter closes with reading selections. A number of helpful tables and diagrams are provided; there are fewer photographic reproductions and they are of poor quality at best.

As for content, the first third deals with introductory material and most of the rest with clinical categories. The goal of being current has largely been achieved. Some might argue that the dosage guides for theophylline on page 149, which were proposed originally in 1973, have now been supplanted. Newer evidence refutes the contention that a single bolus of steroids produces a physiologic response in asthma by two hours (p 162) and extends initial response time to four hours. The chapters on laboratory evaluation of allergy and on immunotherapy for specific prevention have a ring of originality that enhance their effectiveness. However, neither the laboratory evaluation chapter nor any other deals with the roles of bronchoprovocation or pulmonary function tests in evaluating the etiology and pathophysiology of asthma. The standard of accuracy is high and rarely marred by a slipup such as the one in which kapok is listed as a synthetic substance (p 173) when it is a natural plant product.

The audience best served by this book are generalists not expert in allergy who require periodic updating on the subject. Allergy specialists will find little new but will be interested in the views of eminent peers. High marks are earned by this volume for practicality, brevity and readability.

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**MANAGEMENT OF COMMON PROBLEMS IN OBSTETRICS AND GYNECOLOGY**—Daniel R. Mishell, Jr, MD, Professor and Chairman, and Paul F. Brenner, MD, Associate Professor, Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, University of Southern California School of Medicine, Los Angeles. Medical Economics Books, Oradell, NJ 07649, 1983. 531 pages, \$27.50.

This book is a new departure—basically a standard-sized compendium of contemporary standard operating procedures from the present or recent faculty of the Womens Hospital of Los Angeles/University of Southern California Medical Center, the largest obstetric and gynecologic service in the United States. The book offers brief reviews covering the management and treatment of 116 obstetric or gynecologic problems. The material is often refreshingly clear and up-to-date, presented in a direct, straightforward manner. Timely references are included. One can consider many of the procedures as the current

"American-way." The book is offered for reference but it provides an excellent review and update in obstetrics and gynecology.

The sequence of topics suggests a card file arbitrarily or even hastily assembled. The first chapters, "Drugs in Pregnancy" and "Management of the Incompetent Cervix," are followed by "Hydrocephalus." Then, after gynecologic, urologic and endocrine problems, the last chapter in the book is "Management of Fetal Demise." Subjects are often considered in one chapter on diagnosis, followed by a chapter on management. Topics are further broken-up; for example, there is a chapter on "Prepubertal Vulvovaginitis" but other vulvovaginitides are dealt with elsewhere. Why there is one chapter on urinary tract infection in pregnancy and later a consideration of this problem in nonpregnant women is speculative. For the "let's read the book through" enthusiast, all this may be very disconcerting.

There are excellent reviews of postdate pregnancy, fetal lung maturity, electronic fetal monitoring and even external version and placenta accreta. A fine section on oncology includes current cancer-screening, staging and treatment programs. Reproductive endocrinology and infertility are particularly well covered. Amenorrhea, hyperprolactinemia and androgen excess are dealt with clearly.

Omissions include potential side effects of glucocorticoid therapy for the stimulation of fetal pulmonary maturity, staging of endometriosis, sickle cell anemia in pregnancy and the beneficial effects of oral contraceptives. The discussion of abnormal labor, the incompetent cervix, sexually transmitted diseases and alleged sexual assault is inadequate.

Don't judge this valuable book by its cheap cover. Within, the criticisms are small considering the overall excellence of the reviews and protocols provided. Here is a storehouse of experience. Residents and progressive practitioners, especially, will welcome this book.

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**A TEXTBOOK OF EPILEPSY—2nd EDITION**—John Laidlaw, FRCP (Edin), Consultant Physician to Epilepsy Centre, Quarrier's Homes, Bridge of Weir, and Alan Richens, PhD, FRCP, Professor of Pharmacology and Materia Medica, Welsh National School of Medicine, Cardiff, Wales. Churchill Livingstone, Inc., 1560 Broadway, New York, NY 10036, 1982. 544 pages, \$59.00.

This is a multiauthored textbook dealing with the diagnosis and treatment of epilepsy. Many of the authors are well known authorities on the subject. The various chapters of the fairly comprehensive textbook are, in general, well written and the chapters are well referenced. The chapter on electroencephalography can, however, be considered to be a brief introduction to the complex field.

The editors state that their intention was to offer a textbook on epilepsy so that those involved in different disciplines should be able to appreciate work being done by those in disciplines other than their own. This second edition of the textbook meets the editors' objectives.

This book is recommended for physicians who are not neurologists and who are interested in and take care of epileptic patients.

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